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LILITH RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

CAROL LAPRAIRIE
SENIOR RESEARCH OFFICER
RESEARCH DIVISION

A CANADIAN DIRECTORY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW: QUEBEC CITY ADDENDUM

NO. 1985-30

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INTRODUCTION

This addendum of services and resources for women in conflict with the law in the Québec City region is a supplement to User Report 1985-10, A CANADIAN DIRECTORY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW. The information from Québec was collected after the publication date of the national directory, and therefore is being published as a separate addendum for this edition only. Services and organizations included in this addendum were drawn primarily from a telephone survey of organizations listed in "Guide d'informations et de ressources '84", prepared by Denise Rouffignat and Carole Savoie, of the Etablissement de détention Maison Gomin.

Criteria for eligibility were similar to those used in the preparation of the national directory. Programs which provide direct services to women in conflict with the law are listed, as well as those which are concerned with advocacy or public education. As in the rest of the country, there are relatively few programs in this region which serve only women in conflict with the law. However, there are many which may include women offenders as one of their client groups. This addendum therefore includes both programs and services which have a clear mandate for women in conflict with the law, as well as those which are seen by their staff as including women offenders as part of the clientele.

The addendum does not include local community resources available to the general public which may also be of use to women offenders, such as welfare programs, health clinics, public housing, and psychiatric services. These types of resources are undoubtedly useful to women in conflict with the law, but do not address their specific needs, or identify them as a particular target group.

The listings in the addendum are organized by type of service, following the categories and format of the national directory as closely as possible. The final section provides an overview of current programs, clients, evaluations, and a statement of needs identified through the survey of Québec City area service providers. As the primary role of the addendum, like that of the national directory, is to provide a listing of services, this section is brief and descriptive, rather than comprehensive and analytical.

Considerable effort was made to contact all of the programs and services listed in the "Guide d'information et de ressources '84", and to obtain detailed information from those services which appeared appropriate and were willing to be included in the directory. Since the services contacted were drawn from one single source, there may be some which have been overlooked. As well, there were a few with which we were unable to make telephone contact. It is hoped that readers of this addendum will view it as a first edition, and will be willing to inform us of changes and ommissions. We will endeavour to include any further information in an updated second version of the national directory.

ADDENDUM

QUEBEC CITY REGION

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

i) Non-Residential

A) General

Name: SERVICE D'AIDE A LA JEUNESSE

Principal Activities: Volunteer counsellors provide individual crisis and support counselling in the evenings. Serious cases are referred to other community resources.

Client Group: Young women and men (ages 18-25) with personal and social problems. Half the clients are female; of these, approximately 15% have been in conflict with the law. A small number are probationers, most have recently been released from the Masion Gomin or other detention centres. The women experience problems primarily with prostitution, drugs and alcohol.

Time Frame: On-going since 1973.

Funding: Volunteer labour. No donations. Does not have status as a registered charity.

Contact: Jules Hardy
5881, rue des Glaieuls
Charlesbourg (Québec)
GIC IL6
(418) 626-0762

Name: CENTRE DES FEMMES DE LA BASSE VILLE

Principal Activities: With the aim of encouraging the development and autonomy of women, this centre provides a meeting place for women, as well as a number of activities which include support and self-help groups.

Client Group: Women over eighteen, from all backgrounds, including some women in conflict with the law.

Time Frame: On-going since 1982.

Funding: Supported by grants from Secretary of State. Also receives some funding from various provincial sources, including the Education des adultes programme of the ministère d'Education du Quebec. The Centre local de services communautaires (CLSC) pays the salary of a permanent staff person.

Contact: Pauline Gingras
Centre des femmes de la Basse Ville

258, rue Bedard
Quebec (Québec)
GIK 1H7
(418) 648-9092

Name: VIOL-SECOURS

Principal Activities: Telephone assistance is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Staff provide individual crisis and longer term counselling, as well as support and assistance during the legal and medical process. Ongoing public education activities include speakers, group discussions. Referrals are made to other organizations as required.

Client Group: Any woman who has undergone any type of sexual assault, including victims of rape, exhibitionism, incest, etc. Clients may include women who have been in conflict with the law.Speakers have met with groups of women inmates at the Centre de détention Maison Gomin.

Time Frame: On-going since 1978.

Funding: Supported by the ministère des Affaires sociales du Québec and Centraide.

Contact: Brigitte Leblanc
Viol-secours
C.P. 335 Haute-ville,
Québec (Québec)
GIR 4P8
(418) 692-2252

Name: CENTRE- FEMMES D'AUJOURD'HUI

Sponsoring Agency: Sponsored by the Y.W.C.A. until 1985. Currently operates independently.

Principal Activities: Informal counselling and support are available to women who are experiencing any sort of personal difficulties. The centre also operates an information and referral service, and offers a variety of courses promoting women's personal development, including assertiveness training and self-awareness.

Client Group: Women from the metropolitan Québec region, including the south shore. Includes some women in conflict with the law, especially younger offenders.

Time Frame: On-going since 1975.

Funding: Originally financed by the Y.W.C.A., the centre has recently applied for ongoing Centraide funding. Receives small project grants from various provincial government departments, including the ministère d'Education du Québec.

Contact: Jacqueline Fournier
Centre-femmes d'aujourd'hui
855, avenue Holland
Québec (Québec)
GIS 3S5
(418) 683-2548

B) EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Name: LA JONCTION

Sponsoring Agency: EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION CANADA (EIC)

Principal Activities: This outreach programme provides resources and assistance for clients to carry out their own job search. Counsellors assist in job placement and will also refer clients to community resources designed to increase job skills and employability. Women clients will be referred to available women-specific training programmes if appropriate.

Client Group: Persons 18 and older seeking employment who have been in conflict with the law, at all stages of the justice system. Women make up about 5% of the clientele.

Time Frame: On-going since 1977.

Contact: Adrien Pichette, Directeur
La jonction
275, rue de l'Eglise
Suite 514
Québec (Québec)
G1K 6G7
(418)529-5711

C) Alcohol and Drug Treatment

Name: CENTRE JOUR LE PORTAGE

Principal Activities: This is a non-residential treatment centre for persons with substance abuse problems. Treatment consists of one month of group and individual therapy. Groups are mixed, male and female. Clients requiring residential treatment are referred to the Lac Echo clinic near Montreal. A six to eight month follow- up provides additional support for social re-integration, including assistance with job seeking and returning to school.

Client Group: Persons over age 18 with substance abuse problems. Approximately 10-15% of clients are women, many of whom have been in conflict with the law. Persons serving sentences will be accepted at the Lac Echo clinic if referred by corrections personnel.

Time Frame: On-going since November 1983.

Funding: Through the ministère des Affaires sociales and the ministère de Justice de Québec. Also receives some private donations.

Contact: Michel Lebel, Directeur
Centre-jour le Portage
1683, 8e avenue
Limoilou (Québec)
G1J 3N5
(418) 529-5345

Name:	RELIURE D'ASSISE
Sponsoring Agency:	Departement de Toxicomanie, Hôpital St-François d'Assise
Principal Activities:	Professionals teach bookbinding skills, which are expected to lead clients to increased self-discipline and self-confidence, and facilitate social re-integration. Clients stay with the program from one week to six months, depending on individual circumstances.
Client Group:	Persons over age 18 with a substance abuse problem who have been referred by a medical professional. Approximately 50% of clients are women, half of whom have been in conflict with the law. Women who are currently serving sentences, and on probation, are frequently in the program.
Time Frame:	On-going since 1980.
Funding:	Through the departement de Toxicomanie, Hôpital St-François d'Assise.
Contact:	Romain Pelletier Reliure d'Assise Hôpital St-François d'Assise 10, rue de l'Espinet Québec (Québec) GIL 3L5 (418) 525-4378

ii) Residential

A) General

Name: EXPANSION-FEMMES DE QUEBEC

Principal Activities: This is a residential program for up to eight women. As well as transitional housing and supervision, individual counselling and support are provided to residents to assist them in searching for work, returning to school or getting involved in activities that promote social re-integration. Some recreational programs are being developed. Average stay is thr e to six months, but residents may stay longer if necessary.

Client group: Women eighteen years and older in conflict with the law at all stages of the system, including women on remand, serving sentences, on parole, on conditional release, and recently released. May accomodate women with children when necessary, but can not accept women who are violent, or have serious psychiatric, drug, or alcohol problems.

Time Frame: On-going since June, 1984.

Funding: Ministère de la Justice du Québec.

Contact: Colette Fortin, Directrice
401, rue St-Paul
Québec (Québec)
(418) 692-4471

Name: RESEAU FAMILLES D'ACCUEIL

Principal Activities: This program consists of a network of twelve foster-type placement and detention homes. Individuals are placed in family settings which provide supervision in a stable and supportive environment with appropriate role models and activities to assist in their social re-integration. Average length of stay is five to six months, but clients may stay up to 60 days after completion of sentence, if necessary.

Client Group: Men and women 18 and over, who are under the authority of the ministère de la Justice du Québec, serving sentences, on conditional release, on parole with or without supervision. To date, clients have primarily been male. A woman with children could potentially be accomodated, but the program can not accept clients with severe social adjustment or psychiatric problems.

Funding: The ministère de la Justice du Québec provides per diems.

Contact: Denys Huot
Reseau familles d'accueil
1279, boul. Charest ouest
Suite 900,
Québec (Québec)
(418) 687-1441

Name: JONCTION POUR ELLE

Principal Activities: This temporary residence provides emergency housing (maximum stay 30 days), information, and referral to other community resources. Staff assist clients with informal counselling and support, and will accompany women to court, to lawyers, and to social services.

Client Group: Women (over age 18) in crisis in the Québec City region Primarily women who have been the victims of abuse and their children, including women in conflict with the law. Women with severe psychiatric or substance abuse problems cannot usually stay longer than overnight.

Time Frame: On-going since December, 1982.

Funding: Main source is the minisère des Affaires sociales du Québec; the Centre des services sociaux also provides a per diem.

Contact: Lorraine Bergeron
Jonction pour elle
C.P. 1257
Lévis (Québec)
G6W 6R8
(418) 833-8000

Name: MAISON DES FEMMES

Principal Activities: Temporary shelter and assistance are available for up to 15 women. Staff provide support while women seek employment, see lawyers, make plans, etc. Average stay is about two weeks, maximum stay is two months.

Client Group: Women victims of violence (and their children), including some women in conflict with the law. Women with severe psychiatric or substance abuse problems are referred elsewhere.

Time Frame: Ongoing since 1980.

Funding: Mainly from the ministère des Affaires sociales du Québec. The Centre des services sociaux pays a per diem; some donations from private sources.

Contact: Suzanne Bruneau
Maison des femmes
C.P. 366, succ. Haute-ville
Québec (Québec)
GIR 2J7
(418) 692-4315

Name: MAISON KINSMEN

Sponsoring Organization: Kinsmen Club.

Principal Activities: Temporary shelter and protection are available on a very short term basis; the average stay is 2 - 3 days; maximum one month. Staff offer support, orientation, crisis counselling and assistance, and will refer women to other community resources or more specialized residences as required.

Client Group: Women(over 18) in crisis or in transition(divorce, separation) in need of emergency shelter and assistance, and their children. Women who are intoxicated, or with severe psychiatric problems, will not be accepted.

Time Frame: On-going since 1962.

Funding: Through the Kinsmen Club. They also receive a small grant from the Provincial Government.

Contact: Madeleine Bedard
Maison Kinsmen
760, chemin Ste-Foy
Québec (Québec)
(418) 688-9024

Name: LA CLAIRIERE DU QUEBEC

Principal Activities: This residence offers women short-term emergency and medium-term transitional housing for up to a year, if necessary. Staff provide support and informal counselling, assistance with social re-integration.

Client Group: Mothers in difficulties, experiencing minor social integration problems, or in crisis. Includes single mothers. Approximately 10% of clients have been in conflict with the law, usually very minor offences or in relation to child welfare legislation. Can not accept women with severe psychiatric or substance abuse problems, or women who are violent or require a secure facility.

Time Frame: A shelter for single mothers has operated for over 100 years. The current residential facility and program have been in operation since 1970.

Funding: Ministère des Affaires sociales.

Contact: Rosella Tremblay
La Clairiere de Québec
230, Marie de l'Incarnation
Québec (Québec)
GIN 3G4
(418) 681-7734

Name: L'ENGAGE AU FEMININ

Sponsoring Agency: Relais la chaumine

Principal Activities: A community-based, informal network of women who volunteer to open their homes to shelter other women on a

temporary basis (one day to one week is the average stay). Emphasis is on emergency shelter, support, orientation to other community resources, one- on- one assistance.

Client Group: Women in the neighbourhood of St-Jean-Baptiste who find themselves "on the street", without shelter. Includes women with psychiatric and social problems, abused women, women in crisis. About one third of the women have been in conflict with the law.

Time Frame: On-going since 1983.

Funding: Are actively seeking financial support from various sources including the ministère de la Justice and the ministère des Affaires sociales du Quèbec.

Contact: Denise Pageau, Présidente
Relais la chaumine
750, Cote Ste-Claire
Québec (Québec)
GIR 3C4
(418) 663-5011

B) Alcohol and Drug Treatment

Name: MAISON HELENE LACROIX

Principal Activities: Up to ten women in need of shelter can be housed on a temporary basis. Staff provide support, orientation, and counselling assistance, to encourage women to gain control over their own lives. The approach is very flexible, and tailored to suit individual needs.

Client Group: Women between ages 18 and 40 who are experiencing difficulties with drugs, alcohol, or prescription medications, including some women in conflict with the law. Will occasionally accept women under 18.

Time Frame: On-going since 1980.

Funding: Mainly from the ministère des Affaires sociales du Québec. Centraide and some private individuals also provide funds. Some residents are able to pay.

Contact: Carmen Léveillée, Directrice
Maison Hélène Lacroix
809, ave. Paradis
Ste-Foy (Québec)
(418) 527-4682

Name: LA LICORNE

Principal Activities: This residential treatment centre provides a thirteen day treatment which includes group therapy, individual

support and assistance. Staff will accompany residents to court, and to obtain other services, where required.

Client Group: Persons 16 years and older experiencing problems with substance abuse. 40% of clients are women; 25% have been in conflict with the law. Women serving sentences will be accepted upon request by corrections personnel. Persons wishing to enter treatment will be screened for suitability, and may expect a delay since there is a considerable waiting list. Until 1985, the programme was for women only.

Time Frame: On-going since 1981. The men's section opened in 1985.

Contact: Jacqueline Gauthier, Directrice
La Licorne
3364, rue Rochambault
Ste-Foy (Québec)
(418) 656-6256

Name: PROGRAMME DETOXIFIC..TION

Sponsoring Agency: Département de toxicomanie
Hôpital St-François d'Assise

Principal Activities: A one-week residential medical detox program is offered, followed by a psycho-social re-education program consisting of six weeks of group therapy. Therapy is also available for individuals and couples, according to each person's need. An out-patient treatment program is also available.

Client Group:	Persons 18 and over with substance abuse problems (alcohol and drugs), who are motivated to receive assistance. Approximately 25% of clients are women, including women in conflict with the law. Some women attend the program on a court order.
Funding:	Ministère des affaires sociales du Québec, through the Hôpital St-François d'Assise.
Contact:	Roland Poulin Departement de toxicomanie Hôpital St-François d'Assise 45, rue Leclerc Québec (Québec) (418) 525-4303

INSIDE PRISONS

Name: INMATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AT THE ETABLISSEMENT DE DETENTION MAISON GOMIN

Principal Activities: The following programs are available to women serving sentences at this institution:

Recreational Programs - A variety of leisure activities are offered, including sports and physical education; crafts; ceramic and painting classes.

Paid Activities - Women may work in one of two workshops for remuneration; one is a sewing workshop, the other compiles medical-legal kits that are used in hospitals.

Education - Some non-academic courses may be offered in cooperation with the adult education program of the ministère de l'Education du Québec. Women may attend educational insitutions on temporary absence passes.

Counselling - Four specially trained peace officers provide individual counselling and assistance to inmates. There is also a psychological evaluation service.

Health - Health services are provided by weekly visits of one doctor and two nurses.

Client Group: Women serving both provincial and federal sentences. The average length of provincial sentences is 7 days; the average length of federal sentences is 30 months. Approximately 25 to 30 women are housed at any one time.

Time Frame: On-going.

Contact: Denise Rouffignat
Etablissement de détention Maison Gomin
2026, St-Cyrille ouest
Ste-Foy (Québec)
G1V 2K8
(418) 643-4120

Name: GROUPE DE DEFENSE DES DROITS DES DETENUS

Principal Activities: Volunteers provide prison visiting, individual assistance and support to offenders throughout the course of their detention, and occasionally after their release. Group members provide advocacy assistance involving individual legal rights, health and other needs.

Client Group: Primarily prisoners (80%); and ex-offenders. Approximately 15% of clients are women, many of whom have been or are currently in the Etablissement de détention Maison Gomin.

Time Frame: On-going since 1975.

Funding: Mainly through Centraide.

Contact: Ginette Gauvin

Groupe de defense des droits des détenus
570, rue du Roi
Québec (Québec)
GIK 2X2
(418) 522-4343

Name: PROGRAMME PRE-LIBERATION

Sponsoring Agency: Service de réadaptation sociale.

Principal Activities: Staff meet with selected inmates to asses the milieu to which the person plans to return, the availability of family support, and to make an individual plan. Follow-up consists of weekly meetings to assess progress in such areas as involvement in studies, suitable activities, and job-searches. Follow-up continues until the person is eligible for conditional release, after two thirds of the sentence has been served.

Client Group: Inmates in detention centres in the area who have served at least one sixth of their sentence and are judged suitable candidates. Will not accept cases where there is a risk of violence or severe psychiatric disturbance. Clients are primarily male; only three women have been served since the program opened.

Time Frame: On-going since 1982.

Funding: Ministère de la Justice du Québec.

Contact: Hélène Simard
Programme pré-liberation
Service de réadaptation sociale
1279, boul. Charest ouest

Suite 900
Québec (Québec)
(418) 687-1441

PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND ACTION

Name:	ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES
Sponsoring Agency:	Group de défense des droits des détenus
Principal Activites:	This group of volunteers are involved in advocacy and lobbying for the rights of prisoners. There is a committee which specifically looks into issues related to women inmates at the Maison Gomin.
Client Group:	Primarily prisoners (80%) and ex-offenders; 15% of clients are women.
Time Frame:	On-going since 1975.
Funding:	Mainly through Centraide.
Contact:	Ginette Gauvin Groupe de défense des droits des Détenus 570, rue du Roi Québec (Québec) GIK 2X2 (418) 522-4343

OTHER

Name: PROJET NACELLE

Sponsoring Agency: Groupe de défense des droits des détenus.

Principal Activities: This project is intended to provide support for wives and mothers of prisoners. Volunteers and staff will encourage them to get to know one another, form mutual assistance groups, and organize themselves.

Client Group: Wives and mothers of inmates in Quebec City region institutions.

Time Frame: Expected to begin in autumn of 1985.

Funding: Undetermined at this time.

Contact: Ginette Gauvin
Groupe défense des droits des détenus
570, rue du Roi
Québec (Québec)
GIK 2X2
(418) 522-4343

III. CONCLUSIONS

1. Overview of Programs and Services

There is a narrow range of programs and services available to women in conflict with the law in the region of Quebec City. Most organizations offer programs which are not specifically designed for female offenders, but rather, provide service to women in conflict with the law as part of their general service to women, to offenders, and/or to other disadvantaged people.

Women in conflict with the law appear to be relatively well-served in some areas (in relation to drug and alcohol treatment programs, for example), while there are significant ommisions in certain types of services and programs. For example, none of the programs and services listed has as its primary activity public education on the situation of the female offender; providing courtworkers or court-related services; legal assistance; or aftercare programs.

Counselling and support are offered to women by a rather large number of organizations, both in residential and non-residential settings. One non-residential counselling program focusses on assisting youth, and young women in conflict with the law are a significant proportion of the clientele.

There is only one community residential facility designed to house women in conflict with the law. Since 1984, EXPANSION-FEMMES DE QUEBEC has offered transitional housing, supervision, support and counselling exclusively to women offenders. However, a number of other residential facilities also may include women offenders among their clients. Some of these are designed primarily to serve women in crisis, or women with specific needs, such as battered women. These facilities serve women in conflict with the law the same way they serve other women clients.

Many of the counselling and support programs are in relation to substance abuse, with three residential and two non-residential services in the region. One of these (MAISON HELENE LACROIX) is exclusively for women; the other programs report a female client rate of 10 to 50%. Women in conflict with the law were reported to be a large proportion of women clients at almost all the substance abuse programs, although no particular programming for this group

appears to have been developed in any of the settings. The treatment approach varies from setting to setting; most of the programs offer individual and/or group therapy, ranging from informal support counselling to psycho-social treatment approaches. The focus for all the programs is on increasing self-control and self-determination of clients and assisting them to get involved in activities which will promote social re-integration.

The one organization that offers employment-related counselling and placement services specifically designed for persons in conflict with the law does not have any programs designed to meet the potentially very different employment and training needs of women offenders. Although the respondent was aware of the specific needs of women offenders, the program generally served men.

Funding of programs available to women offenders varies. A few charge fees for service, or receive government grants or per diems for specific activities, such as residential services. Most receive funding from the provincial government, especially the ministère des Affaires sociales and the ministère de la Justice du Québec. Several organizations that operate independently of the Centres des services sociaux nevertheless have one or several positions paid by the CSS. Many of the organizations and services receive (or are hoping to receive) charitable donations, often through Centraide, less frequently through individual donors. Almost all the organizations rely heavily on volunteer labour. None received sustaining grants from any federal government department, with the exception of one Employment and Immigration Canada outreach program. One or two organizations mentioned having received small grants from the Department of the Secretary of State.

2. Overview of Program Evaluations

As part of the information-gathering process for this addendum, program and service providers were asked about the state of evaluation of their operations. The state of evaluations for the Québec City region is very similar to what was discovered for the rest of the country, as documented in the national directory, in that formal program evaluation of services available for women in conflict with the law is non-existent. Some program monitoring and informal internal reviews do take place, but none of the respondents were

able to say that their programs and services had undergone a formal evaluation process.

As will be seen in the following section, a number of respondents raised the desirability of assessing the usefulness, effectiveness, and adequacy of existing programs. Some service providers, particularly those involved most directly with services to women, appear to be aware of the need for assessing how well existing services meet the specific needs of women in conflict with the law in the region.

3. Needs Identified by Service Providers.

This section presents a brief summary of the various program and service needs identified by service providers. As part of the process of compiling this addendum, an informal survey of service providers was undertaken to establish some of their perceptions of unmet program and service needs. As with the national directory, this was not a major part of the data collection process, and the following section should not be viewed as the result of systematic study. However, certain specific needs were identified by service providers, and will be mentioned here, in order to suggest some preliminary program and service directions.

There is a widely expressed concern that services specific to women offenders are seriously lacking in the region. While it is recognized that services to men are also less than adequate, several respondents suggested that to at least upgrade service levels to equal what is available for male offenders would be a great improvement.

Almost all the respondents stated that more community residential facilities are needed to house women in conflict with the law. There is only one transition house for female offenders. While several other residences for women do exist, they are often not equipped to handle "difficult" behaviour cases, older women, women with children, drug and alcohol abusers, and/or women with psychiatric problems. The situation in the Quebec City region is therefore similar to what was discovered in other regions of the country: women in conflict with the law who might need specialized treatment often do not have access to existing supervised housing.

Economic problems of all types, including unemployment, were identified by many respondents as central to the difficulties experienced by women in conflict with the law. Employment counselling programs, including job skills training and job placement services that are appropriate for women offenders are urgently needed. This might include counselling and training in non-traditional occupations, as well as workshops that assist women to gradually get involved in the job market, perhaps with temporary training placements in job settings. The only employment outreach program for persons in conflict with the law has served very few women.

An improved level of service was seen by several respondents who work directly with women in conflict with the law as an important requirement within the detention centre. Health services, recreational programs, job skills training, education, and pre-release planning and preparation were identified as critical areas. Social service personnel in the Maison Gomin are aware of a need for psycho-therapeutic treatment services in the detention centre. The lack of funding for inmate programs causes the Maison Gomin to rely largely on volunteers and students on placement to run many of its activities, leading to a certain instability and difficulty in long-term programming and planning. Funding for professional staff, perhaps on a contract basis of a few hours a week, was seen as necessary in upgrading inmate programs.

Post-release follow-up and support were also identified as major needs. Most service providers felt that women were left very much on their own after release, and that this gap in service should be filled by CLSC and parallel service networks with specific programming and outreach. The establishment of ex-offender self-help groups, as well as individual one-on-one counselling and support, were suggested.

Many women in conflict with the law are also mothers; approximately 50% of women in the Maison Gomin have family responsibilities. Available and accessible child care was seen as an important prerequisite for women to begin the process of job market re-integration and educational upgrading.

Beyond the immediate post-release period, social re-integration, rehabilitation and re-education programs, specifically designed to meet the needs of women, are urgently needed. Young women were generally identified as a special population requiring specialized programs aimed at

prevention, information, and alternatives to incarceration.

Several respondents suggested it is essential for women offenders to know what resources and services are available to them; what rights they have, and how to exercise these rights, to ensure that existing and future services are well used. Advocacy in relation to individual cases of female offenders was also considered essential.

The need for information goes beyond informing potential service users. Service providers and program planners also require information about the needs of women offenders in order to improve or develop adequate services. Specific information on programs, policies and services in other areas of the country was seen as a need by one organization; several others felt a need for more information on the specific situation of women offenders in Quebec to be a prerequisite to improving services to women in conflict with the law in the region.